

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY
5 November 2006

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IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

DECEMBER/JANUARY HOLIDAY SEASON

SASAR SUB COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT BACK

FIRST EMCOM PARTY ON AIR REGION 1

WHO SAID MORSE CODE IS DEAD?

HAMNET MANUALS

ECHOLINK & COMMENTS

HAMNET OVERVIEW

The Hamnet Bulletin is read at 12 noon CAT on 7,070MHz. We have had to revert back to the old frequency as we are interfering with a bulletin on 7:062MHz. I would like some suggestions on changing this time and frequency early in 2007. Maybe even a change of day may be useful simply because Sunday is so busy on 40 Metres.

The bulletin is distributed to all Provincial Directors for reading on their local repeaters a few days prior to the first Sunday of every month. All subsequent Sundays are used to establish an informal net and exchange weather reports and other items of general interest.

The HAMNET section of the SARL website is open to all amateur radio operators. This is to encourage non League members to join the League and also to encourage newly licensed amateurs to consider joining HAMNET.

Please also note that HAMNET is a voluntary, non profit group of amateurs who make their unique communication skills available to assist and help others in distress during and after disasters. HAMNET is also represented on the sub-committee of the South African Search & Rescue organisation.

Training Modules have been developed and are available either from your Provincial Director or from the National director via e-mail.

HAMNET forms part of the Constitution of the South African Radio League. That means that you have to be a member of the SARL to be a member of HAMNET.

Also join us on weekdays at 6pm local time for the HAMNET Weather Net on 3.760MHz. This net exchanges weather conditions around the country and is also useful as a propagation check.

DECEMBER/JANUARY HOLIDAY SEASON

All schools close on Friday December 1st and builders holiday will in all probability start on Friday 15 December.

The December/January holiday pattern is being discussed now due to the fact that when the December bulletin is read on 3 December, schools have already closed and the “silly season” has already begun.

Like in the past, the request will go out to all Hamnet members to do a bit of monitoring on our emergency frequency of 7:060MHz in the 40M band. We sincerely hope that conditions may have improved to allow us to maintain good communication during specific days.

Obviously our first period will be over the weekend of 1 to 3 December as some holiday makers will probably leave on holiday as soon as the schools close.

Our next weekend will be the 15th to the 17th of December when we anticipate a lot more traffic on the roads. The last “outward” monitoring few days will be over the period 22nd to 24th of December when the bulk of holiday makers will be on the road for the week break between Christmas and New Year.

We anticipate traffic on Monday and Tuesday the 1st and 2nd of January 2007 and again over the weekend just prior to the opening of schools. Those dates will be in the January 2007 bulletin.

Again, just a reminder of the JAMLINE cell phone number namely 084 JAMLINE or 084 5265463. Rob Byrne will be only too happy to hear from us regarding road conditions like accidents, snarl-ups, adverse weather conditions etc. This information gets fed into the radio network systems around the country and is useful for travellers on the road.

We will also be making use of Echolink, especially down to Pietermaritzburg and possibly down to the Southern Cape.

SASAR SUB COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT BACK

The South African Search & Rescue meeting held on 19 October and the ARCC centre at Johannesburg International airport, was well attended. Charles Norval in his new role as Director of SASAR chaired the meeting!

Two items that were discussed at the meeting are of interest to Hamnet members.

Charles asked us to be the “eyes and ears” for Air Rescue Control Centre ARCC when we hear of or are informed of aircraft accidents or aircraft that have gone missing. His reasons for asking us to participate more are simply because we are well located all over the country and may know of an incident before they do.

It is not a request to monitor their emergency frequencies, which to most of us are not accessible, but to be available to let them know when an accident happens or where we are the first to know about it. Should we become aware of an incident, by all means phone me and I will let Charles know. Obviously

correct location, if possible, GPS location, will be very useful in helping to locate the aircraft.

Charles also mentioned the possibility of an exercise in the Southern Cape area in the first quarter of 2007. This area is very mountainous and densely forested in parts and will make an ideal spot for an exercise. As soon as we have more information, we will let all parties know and ensure good participation from us.

FIRST EMCOM PARTY ON AIR REGION 1

IARU Region 1 invites HQ-stations of its member societies and stations of special emergency communication groups to participate 'First EmCom party on the Air' November 18th, 2006 at 11.00 - 15.00 UTC. The operation will happen on our emergency centre-of-activity frequencies on 40, 20 and 15 meters (+/-QRM). During the first party we will not use our frequencies on 80 and 17 meters.

The objective of the party is to 1) increase the common interest among member societies in emergency communication, 2) test how usable these frequencies are cross the Region 1 and 3) create practices for international emergency communication between Region 1 member societies and special emergency communication groups. There are also some special stations invited to participate like 4U1ITU, TP2CE and ITU conference station from Turkey.

During the first party we will concentrate into two first objectives. The tentative plan is to organize this kind of party twice a year. Please remember: This is not a contest - this is an emergency communication exercise!

The protocol is following:

IARU Region 1 HQ station during this first party is OF3F in Finland. It will be QRV simultaneously on all three bands: 7060, 14 300 and 21 360 kHz.

Stations are calling: This is HQ station of (RSGB, REF etc.) calling Region 1 EmCom stations (Please announce time to time 'this is an exercise').

During first three hours each participating station will try to contact OF3F and also as many other national HQ and special group -stations as possible. During the last hour (14.00 - 15.00 UTC) national HQ and special group -stations will contact again OF3F for reporting. This reporting will take place only on one band. All traffic in the party will happen on SSB.

The message during the first three hours consists of eight numbers and the abbreviation of the national society/special group - in other words: real RS-report, number of bands simultaneously in use and number of operators, the transmitter power and the name of the society/group (like RSGB, REF etc.). We will use 'slash' to separate details while changing messages: e.g. 4U1ITU could give to OF3F following information: 59/3/03/500/ITU

RS = 59 (readability 5, strength 9)

3 = number of bands simultaneously in use at 4U1ITU

03 = there are 3 operators at 4U1ITU

500 = 4U1ITU runs 500 W

ITU = ITU

The message to IARU Region 1 HQ station OF3F during the last hour will be following: RS + total number of Region 1 societies/groups contacted during the party + same number on 7, 14 and 21 MHz. E.g. 4U1ITU gives to OF3F: 59/28/00/23/15

RS = 59

28 = total of 28 different HQ/special group -stations contacted

00 = no contacts made on 7 MHz

23 = 23 different HQ/special group -stations contacted on 14 MHz

15 = 15 different HQ/special group -stations contacted on 21 MHz

We ask all participants to keep up logs for analyses. Please follow up Region 1 Emergency Communication pages for possible extra information. The summary of the party will be published in December 2006.

You are welcome to participate and please do not hesitate to contact us for more information. We would like to collect as much information as possible for the planning of the possible second EmCom -party in March/April 2007.

WHO SAID MORSE CODE IS DEAD?

This article appeared in our Local Mail & Guardian publication and I came across it just by chance.

Morse Code, the dots-and-dashes signalling system first used at sea on the Titanic and long since consigned to the scrapheap, made a triumphant comeback this week in the rescue of a stranded fisherman.

The man had run aground near Hayling Island (a man made Island in the south of England) when his boat began taking on water. He had no modern safety aids with him as he was busy refurbishing a new boat and all had been transferred to the new boat.

But what he did have with him was a torch. Undaunted, he took the torch and knowing Morse Code, flashed his torch in the general direction of the Coast Guard building, where it was noticed by Steve Mann, a duty officer at the time.

Quote, "I was absolutely amazed to see the flashed SOS message. I didn't think I would ever see it. My colleagues, who have been here for about 12 years, have never heard of such a case before. It's very unconventional" end quote!

Morse code no longer forms part of coast-guard training but Mann picked it up along the way purely out of curiosity!

He added that this fisherman was very fortunate to have been rescued as he had no radio, flares or any of the normal items required for attracting attention in times of distress.

So who said there is no further use for the old tried and trusted Morse code!

I checked on an Atlas and found Emsworth in the south of England. This fisherman was on his way from Emsworth to nearby Thornham Marina. This is near the Isle of Wight!

Another correction on this article, the code sent from the Titanic was not SOS but CQD, which was the code of that time.

HAMNET MANUALS

A new batch of HAMNET Manuals has been printed. There are a few new members who do not have access to the internet to download the manual. Please let me know who would like a copy sent on.

ECHOLINK & COMMENTS

I have mentioned communicating via Echo link once or twice before and had no positive response.

I would again like to suggest that when a Province or a group have a weekly meeting with echo link available, and you would like me to join in the net, please let me know about a day before the time by SMS or by e-mail, and I will make an effort to join in the evenings activities.

Just a thought thanks to a suggestion by Danie, ZS6VWD!

Also, well done to the Western Cape and KZN teams who have been involved in exercises during the last two weeks! Both involving Govt. and other NGOs!

The summary of the Western Cape exercise is available for download from the website of the SARL under Hamnet.

Consider this a point to ponder can we change the Hamnet bulletin time to 17H30 on the first Sunday of every month on 7:060MHz with a possible relay on to 3.760MHz. Think about it!

That is all for today. Comments and suggestions to: jfbotha@iburst.co.za

More information available on www.sarl.org.za then click on HAMNET in the left hand column for all the details you may need. Bulletin ends.